I

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Agriculture

Improvement of millets in the Agricultural department.

* 692 *Q.*—Mr. ABDUL HAMID KHAN: Will the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there is an expert for the improvement of millets in the Agricultural department;

(*b*) if so, when this section was opened and where it has got its head-quarters;

(*c*) what are the qualifications of the expert for the place;

(*d*) whether cholam is the most important of all the millets, and, if so, whether he has been working on this crop;

(*e*) if he has been working on the crop, what are the results of economic importance that he has been able to obtain;

(*f*) the extent of the area in which the improved variety of cholam has been sown round about Coimbatore;

(*g*) whether it is a fact that the Government propose to start a millet sub-station in the Ceded districts, if so, where;

(*h*) if the main station has not produced any results, whether the opening of a sub-station in Ceded districts is necessary; and

(*i*) whether this opening of sub-station is meant for the promotion of the first assistant of the millet specialist to the Madras Agricultural Service?

A.—(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) In October 1923; at Coimbatore.

(*c*) A Botany graduate with nine years' practical experience of plant breeding work under Mr. Parnell, the late Paddy Specialist.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) The various strains of cholam grown in the Presidency have been examined and 944 single selections have been made, sown, and studied for the two seasons, viz., summer and main crop. Enough seed has been obtained from 36 of the best of these to carry out a comparative trial this coming year. These comparative trials mark the beginning of the final process which will result in an improved strain being given out to the ryots. The morphological characters of the different cholams have been studied in detail at the same time.

(*f*) An improved strain has not yet been issued. It must be realized that on the analogy of paddy the actual evolution of a new and improved strain which can be put in the hands of the ryots takes about seven years and the station was only opened at the end of 1923.

(*g*) Yes; the Director of Agriculture submitted proposals for opening a millet station at Adoni but the proposals were deferred as details of cost of the entire scheme were not ready.

(h) The main station has produced excellent results. It has been found with other crops that it is necessary to have more than one breeding station to meet the varying needs of the Presidency since a strain which may suit one locality will not necessarily suit another.

(i) No.

Mr. ABDUL HAMID KHAN :—" May I know whether the gentleman who is in charge of this department at Coimbatore is the only gentleman that the Government has found most qualified for the purpose ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" Quite so."

Mr. ABDUL HAMID KHAN :—" May I know from the hon. Minister what the qualifications are of the assistant who is now helping this gentleman in this department."

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" Notice."

Co-operative Societies

Reduction of the rate of interest on loans to land mortgage banks.

*693 Q.—Mr. A. B. SHETTY: Will the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state—

(a) whether any representations have been made to the Government to reduce the rate of interest charged by them for the loans they give to land mortgage banks and building societies ; and

(b) whether they have ever considered this matter and come to any decision upon it ?

A.—(a) Yes.

(b) Yes, the Government have decided not to reduce the rate of interest for the present.

Mr. A. B. SHETTY :—" With reference to the answer given in clause (b), may I know whether the Government propose to consider the question of reducing the rate of interest at any time ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" We are considering the question and we will go into the whole question at the time of the preparation of the budget for the next year."

Mr. P. BHAKTAVATSULU NAYUDU :—" May I know on what basis the Government arrived at the decision not to reduce the rate of interest ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" The answer is only for the present year. Practically the loans budget was prepared at the time of the last budget, so we could not do anything by way of reducing the interest. We will be able to do something after going into the whole question."

Rao Bahadur C. S. RATNASABAPATI MUDALIYAR :—" Will the Government be pleased to consider the desirability of lowering the rate of interest on monies lent to local bodies ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member will have to give notice of this question. It is foreign to the question under consideration."